

2012

## **What a difference a year made! : an evaluation of the National Year of Reading 2012 in Western Australia, Queensland and the Australian Capital Territory**

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What a difference  
a year made!



An evaluation of the  
National Year of Reading  
2012 in Western Australia,  
Queensland and the  
Australian Capital Territory







What a difference a year made!

An evaluation of the National Year of Reading  
2012 in Western Australia, Queensland and the  
Australian Capital Territory.

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## Contents



Acknowledgements	3
Executive summary	4
What is the report about?	4
What was the National Year of Reading campaign?	4
What did we do?	5
What did we find?	5
What legacy has been generated?	5
What conclusions did we reach?	6
Chapter 1: Introduction	8
Purpose of the report	8
Overview of the National Year of Reading	8
Chapter 2: Research method	12
Chapter 3: Profiles of the National Year of Reading	15
Profile One: National Year of Reading at a national level	15
Profile Two: National Year of Reading in the Australian Capital Territory	37
National Year of Reading community programs in the ACT	44
Profile Three: National Year of Reading in Western Australia	48
National Year of Reading community programs in WA	58
Profile Four: The National Year of Reading in Queensland	64
National Year of Reading community programs in QLD	73
Chapter 4: Cross-case analysis	77
Chapter 5: Conclusions and recommendations	86
References	93
Appendix 1: Interviews, document collection and surveys	95
Appendix 2: Table of programs and partners by state/territory documented in the evaluation	97





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of the library staff and their partners to share their reflections about the innovative and creative programs they have implemented in the name of the National Year of Reading. In so doing, they have allowed their passion for their work to shine through.

The Evaluation of the National Year of Reading project provides a profile of the activities undertaken at the national level and by three states/territories during the course of the National Year of Reading. As such, the report provides a representation of what actually occurred during the National Year of Reading and the reader should remain mindful that there were many more activities and programs which were not reported on here. Having read the case studies and relevant sections of the report, the participants kindly gave their permission for us to publicise the results but our interpretation and deductions from the data are not necessarily shared by them. Nor do views expressed in this report necessarily represent the views of the Office for the Arts or the Department of Regional Australia, Local Government, Arts and Sport.

Finally, we would also like to acknowledge and thank Sue McKerracher for her extensive feedback on the final draft of this report and Llandis Barratt-Pugh and John Hall for their help in editing and commenting on the final draft. The images used in this report were provided courtesy of the Library Agency, SLWA, SLQ and Libraries ACT. We would like to thank everyone who allowed us to feature them and their programs and events through photographs, these bring the vibrancy and fun generated by the National Year of Reading to life.

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## Executive summary



### What is the report about?

This report is an evaluation of how the National Year of Reading helped to build a reading culture across the nation. The evaluation was undertaken by The Centre for Research in Early Childhood Education, Edith Cowan University, Western Australia. The report describes the nature and outcomes of the National Year of Reading in the four case studies, including a consideration of what participating organisations delivered beyond what would normally be expected of them. The findings lead to a series of conclusions about the program's successes, challenges and legacy followed by recommendations about how these successes can be sustained and extended beyond 2012.

### What was the National Year of Reading campaign?

The National Year of Reading campaign was initiated by the Australian Library and Information Association (ALIA). A founder partners body comprising members of State Libraries and Public Library Associations from around the country was established to access funding and to drive the initiative. Federal government funding for the National Year of Reading was successfully sought from the Office for the Arts (the Department of Regional Australia, Local Government,

Arts and Sport) and the Library Agency was contracted to operationalise and coordinate the National Year of Reading in 2012. The National Year of Reading ran from January to December 2012.

The purpose of the National Year of Reading was to help build a nation of readers, augmenting and adding to the wealth of ongoing reading initiatives across Australia. It aimed to establish a reading culture in every home and encourage parents and caregivers to share books with their children everyday. In addition, it aimed to promote the benefits of reading as a life skill and catalyst for well-being through a multiplicity of reading initiatives and venues across Australia. In order to achieve this, the National Year of Reading sought to create a unified national framework that allowed for flexibility at state/territory and local level. This framework was built on the following three principles:

#### 1. Partnerships

A network of support was established across Australia that included 15 founder partners, 51 national and 60 state/territory ambassadors and 79 friends. These partnerships were pivotal to the success of the campaign as they played a key role in raising awareness of the National Year of Reading and in encouraging involvement in reading programs and events across Australia. In addition, partnerships at a local level between local authorities, libraries, media, publishers,







business partners, education institutions and community organisations were essential as they would drive the programs, events and activities that promoted the National Year of Reading messages.

## 2. Strong identity

The Love2Read logo was developed to represent the National Year of Reading and to ensure that National Year of Reading programs and events were easily identifiable and highly visible. It was made freely available from the National Year of Reading Love2Read website and could be used with or without the 'National Year of Reading 2012' text. The National Year of Reading website was developed to create a virtual community, mirroring the partnerships, connecting and updating participants across Australia, providing a central source of information and resources and providing a platform for discussion and comment.

## 3. Different levels of implementation

Programs and events were delivered at a national, state/territory and local level to ensure maximum local involvement. Four national campaigns were implemented and the states/territories organised a range of National Year of Reading events and activities led by their main library. These acted as a catalyst for a host of local level events developed through partnerships between government, non-government and community organisations. This framework enabled the generation of support and momentum at a national level, while devolving ownership of local initiatives to the 'grass roots' level.

## What did we do?

After extensive consultation with the Library Agency, Western Australia (WA) the Australian Capital Territory (ACT) and Queensland QLD) were identified as representative evaluation sites. These sites formed the basis of our investigation of state/territory and local partnerships and the programs and events they were promoting. In addition we invited key stakeholders from the Library Agency, the founder partners, a number of National Year of Reading ambassadors and national campaign partners to take part in the evaluation. These formed the basis of our national perspective on the National Year of Reading and the following three questions formed the basis of our evaluation:

1. What is the nature and outcomes of National Year of Reading partnerships at a national, state, program and event level in relation to the promotion of the importance of reading as a life skill, the importance of a reading culture in the home, and the importance of sharing books with children from birth?
2. How has involvement in the National Year of Reading added value to the outcomes within and between participating organizations that are normally achieved in a year?
3. How will the partnerships and programs be sustained and developed beyond 2012?

Given the organic and multi-layered approach to the National Year of Reading a qualitative case study approach was utilised, using interviews to explore the nature, impact and

sustainability of the National Year of Reading at a national, state/territory and local level. In addition, in order to capture the richness and diversity of programs and events, a desk-based review of photographic evidence of artefacts and illustrations of practice was also undertaken. We explored the national perspective through the Library Agency, founder partners and ambassadors and profiled the National Year of Reading at a local level in WA, the ACT and QLD. These were presented as individual case studies, which include key findings for each one. We then undertook a cross case analysis to synthesise the key findings from each case study in relation to the three research questions. These findings formed the basis of our conclusions and recommendations.

## What did we find?

The National Year of Reading substantially met, and in many cases exceeded, aims and expectations. The National Year of Reading was very successful in creating a campaign that promoted reading across Australia at a national, state/territory and local level. It is clear that there are many ways in which the National Year of Reading contributed towards building a nation of readers, details of our findings are presented in chapters three and four, however in essence the National Year of Reading made a difference through:

1. State/territory library led partnerships which enhanced the capability and capacity of agencies through their partnerships to build a stronger, more unified national literacy network. By the end of 2012 over 230 partners had committed to the National Year of Reading. Many of these partnerships were multi-layered, making connections at national, state/territory and local levels through associations with libraries.
2. The delivery of more than 4,000 programs and events nationwide to over 200,000 people in diverse communities and through multiple media platforms facilitated through libraries. Significant return on investment was gained through media exposure, local grants and in-kind agency support. New audiences were reached and existing audiences consolidated.
3. Raising the status and visibility of reading and literacy nationwide through the central coordinating role of libraries, the use of ambassador role models and establishing a reading 'brand' that provided a central focus for partnership agencies and unified their work.

These aspects are discussed in detail in the final chapter of this report.

## What legacy has been generated?

The National Year of Reading has generated a range of enduring legacies. It has created a national infrastructure of agencies led by state/territory libraries reinforcing existing partnerships, developing new partnerships, and increasing the capacity of each partner agency. It has established a well-recognised national brand and associated reading with key community role models. Finally, it has established a national family and community reading agenda, and cross-sector agency support to extend this agenda beyond 2012.





## What conclusions did we reach?

### 1. The national framework was central to the success of the National Year of Reading.

The framework provided an overall structure for the successful implementation of the National Year of Reading. The framework gave guidance and support yet allowed for local ownership and flexibility. This helped to unify and promote the central aims of the National Year of Reading across Australia. In particular, the national campaigns used branding and ambassadors to create a powerful link between the agencies, while providing opportunities for local initiatives.

### 2. Libraries were at the heart of the development, delivery and success of the National Year of Reading.

Libraries coordinated the National Year of Reading at state/territory level and liaised with national campaign coordinators. Partnerships with libraries at state/territory level enabled the campaign to be implemented at a local level. Libraries were the catalyst for promoting and supporting programs and events, while increasing library membership and raising their profile as literacy educators. This was achieved through the formation of a state/territory library steering group representative, who coordinated library initiatives and made links with other local organisations. Libraries benefited from their engagement by redefining their core strategic future, finding new partners, increasing potential membership, and engaging in community programs and events.

### 3. Partnerships were crucial to the implementation and outcomes of the National Year of Reading.

An extensive network of diverse partners at the national, state/territory and local level was established through the national framework. These partnerships provided a vehicle through which programs and events were delivered and interlinked, thus reinforcing the key reading messages and practices within and across different communities. Many of these partnerships were new and 'non traditional', forging links between previously disparate organisations. These partnerships increased capacity to deliver reading outcomes while simultaneously building the capability of each agency.

### 4. Key messages were delivered to new and target audiences.

The National Year of Reading generated a wealth of more than 4,000 programs and events from community led activities to national events. The national campaigns created excitement and anticipation and provided a catalyst for localised events, while incorporating key reading messages into local priorities. The national campaigns were designed to engage different target audiences, focusing on particular messages and disseminating effective practice. The sheer number and variety of initiatives meant that many families and individuals were surrounded by the key messages as part of their everyday lives.





Several newly established partnerships enabled the reach of the programs to be extended to new audiences. However, not all partnerships were equally successful due to the complexity of collaboration across agencies, funding issues and workload implications. The importance of culturally and linguistically appropriate initiatives was seen as central to the promotion of key reading messages in Aboriginal and in culturally and linguistically diverse (CaLD) communities. The importance of involving those groups that are traditionally 'hard to reach' and supporting organisations and communities to 'close the gap' was seen as imperative to future national reading campaigns. This involved consolidating the learning that had been accumulated about the challenges partners had faced.

#### **5. Evaluation needed to be extended.**

A number of program and event coordinators were involved in monitoring and evaluating the success of initiatives especially in relation to the number of participants attending events and, to a lesser extent, the program outcomes from the participants perspectives. This was often augmented with anecdotal evidence about the success of the program or event. However, it was clear that the coordinators were keen to develop a more rigorous way of evaluating the outcomes, in order to replicate the most effective elements and extend the initiative.

#### **6. National communication resources were important to sustaining a network of partnerships.**

The campaign utilised media extensively to make reading practices more visible and a variety of media, social media and information technology was used to promote and sustain programs and events. This included the use of new technology such as blogs, Facebook, Twitter, Flickr and You Tube which were used to target specific groups. The Love2Read website generated a brand and logo that has become a well-recognised and powerful symbol. State/territory libraries supplemented the national communication strategy by utilising existing resources to maintain networks across their partner agencies and to connect to participants. Branding new and existing library activities under the National Year of Reading banner resulted in an increase in promotion, publicity and media opportunities that have the potential to both extend beyond 2012 and to make connections between complimentary agencies.

#### **7. Funding was a significant factor in the development and delivery of the campaign.**

Funding for the National Year of Reading came from the founder partners, federal, state/territory and local government and philanthropic and corporate sponsors. Although not all initiatives required funding, the implementation of some programs was determined by the availability of funding. In addition, although the National Year of Reading was supported through the enthusiasm and dedication of both volunteers and professionals, in some cases - particularly in coordination roles, this created additional work. Continuing the campaign beyond 2012 will require the founding partners to determine what form a national coordinating trust should take and to develop the strategy to gain ongoing funding.

#### **8. Bi-partisan support was identified as important to future of the National Year of Reading.**

At the national level, the process of accessing federal funding enabled relationships to be established with senior politicians and necessitated the involvement of the Governor General and state/territory government leaders. While this was very beneficial for the National Year of Reading in terms of media exposure, it might also have generated perceptions about the political alignment of the brand with specific parties or leaders. In terms of future planning, participants in this evaluation project indicated that a cross-party commitment to prospective campaigns would offer the advantage of positioning the initiative in a politically neutral context.

#### **9. Interest from other countries was generated by the National Year of Reading.**

Much has been learned from the multiple program and events delivered during the campaign. The campaign has been viewed with interest by other national bodies and ambassadors have been invited to events in Asia. Future initiatives would benefit from developing national relationships with other developed countries with a view to pooling ideas, comparing and contrasting achievements and learning from other national initiatives, and sharing collaboration across media platforms. Additionally, insights from other National Year of Reading initiatives could be used to strengthen the development of programs that target audiences traditionally identified as 'hard to reach' or 'at risk'.

In conclusion, the government has recently committed to significant targets to raise Australian educational standards and reading is a critical foundation platform for the achievement of those targets. The National Year of Reading through state/territory libraries has been instrumental in focusing and involving a wide range of stakeholders in reading outside the school environment - in the home, workplace and community. In short, it has made a difference.

Modest national funding has been significantly leveraged to create a vibrant national campaign with impressive numbers of participants involved and high profile media personalities fronting media events that potentially reached many homes in Australia. A robust national network has been created and grown in capability through the experience of delivering more than 4,000 programs and events to over 200,000 people. The Love2Read brand has been nationally established and it linked the agencies and participants in a universal purpose to generate a social culture of reading which has the potential to pervade every home. Harnessing this development to generate further growth will require improved evaluation systems, decisions about a national coordinating trust, and ongoing funding sources. Future initiatives will need specific strategies to target those groups that are most excluded from reading practices, distant from resources, and performing poorly in comparative national literacy assessments. The energy of this campaign has generated a national network and a brand that has created a platform for establishing reading as a visible and important social practice and placed libraries at the centre of change. However, this is only the beginning and expanding this platform would support not only the development of a nation of readers, but also help meet educational targets for the future.







## Chapter 1: Introduction



### Purpose of the report

The Centre for Research in Early Childhood Education at Edith Cowan University was commissioned to undertake an evaluation of the National Year of Reading 2012, with a focus on case studies of three states and territories: Western Australia (WA), Queensland (QLD) and the Australian Capital Territory (ACT). The report includes profiles of the National Year of Reading at a national and state/territory level (chapter three), followed by a cross-case analysis to elaborate the key findings (chapter four). Finally, conclusions and recommendations are presented to inform the future development of policy and practice (chapter five).

*We had a huge response, which is great, and having the two Ministers, and the Prime Minister, at our launch was such a huge boost. It was fantastic, and helped us get into the traditional media, which can be really hard.*

Library Agency team member

### Overview of the National Year of Reading

#### Context

The idea for a National Year of Reading was adopted at the Australian Library and Information Association (ALIA) Public Libraries Summit in 2009. Although no funding had been secured, freelance communications specialist Sue McKerracher offered to work on an in-kind basis to scope the project, initiate partnerships and develop the business case for an approach to government and other potential funding sources. She created an identity, the Library Agency, for the central coordinating team, ensuring that although the word library would not feature in the National Year of Reading branding, it would be clear to stakeholders that libraries were the driving force behind the campaign.

A group of 15 founder partners was established, together contributing \$89,500, which was used to develop the campaign branding and print collateral (16%), set up the website (30%), cover the fees of a fundraising advisor and reader development professional (23%), and pay travel and office costs for the team working on the project during 2010 (31%).







With the assistance of the founder partners, \$1.396 million of federal government funding for the National Year of Reading project was successfully sought from the Australian Government including the Office for the Arts (in the Department of Regional Australia, Local Government, Arts and Sport); the Australia Council and the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR). With ALIA acting as the auspice body for the funding and the founder partner group overseeing and directing the project, the Library Agency was contracted to carry out and coordinate the National Year of Reading in July 2011. The Library Agency reported monthly to the founder partners on National Year of Reading activities and initiatives and ALIA provided regular financial updates.

## National organisational structures

Several roles were created within the Library Agency to oversee the implementation of the National Year of Reading. The director (Sue McKerracher – 0.5 FTE) was responsible for setting the strategic direction of the National Year of Reading, liaising with the founder partners, promoting the National Year of Reading to major partners and the media, and raising the profile of the National Year of Reading as a campaign at a government level.

The project director (Robyn Ellard – 1 FTE) was responsible for coordinating four national campaigns (*One Country Reading*, *The Reading Hour*, *Public Library Membership Drive*, and *National Year of Reading in the Workplace*), and events such as the launch of the National Year of Reading and the final legacy event.

One project manager (Brenda Currie – 0.6 FTE) acted as the liaison and point of contact for National Year of Reading ambassadors, partners and friends; and another project manager (Donna McDowell – 0.6 FTE) was responsible for utilising social media, documenting and cataloguing National Year of Reading events, and managing media data to do with social media, the National Year of Reading website and the National Year of Reading calendar.

There was also a library liaison role (Karen Ward-Smith – 0.1 FTE) and support from a reader development professional (Paula Kelly, project contract from July to December 2010) and a corporate relations expert (Bronwyn Lewis, project contract during 2012).

## State/territory organisation structures

The organisation structures of each state/territory differed slightly according to the context and needs of their population. However, in essence each state and territory created a steering group, which included a founder partner, who represented their state/territory at the national level. Steering group members liaised with national partners and local partners to facilitate collaboration between organisations on the development and delivery of programs and events. Additional supporting groups were established in each state/territory depending on their needs and goals. These are explained in detail in each case study.

## Funding

While the level of funding that was received to implement the National Year of Reading was a significant amount and it funded some aspects of the national campaigns and events, it was not enough to run a fully funded national campaign that would reach communities at a local level. The National Year of Reading in the UK received £4 million from government in 1998 (National Literacy Trust, 2008) and slightly more than £3 million in 2008 (National Literacy Trust, 2011), while the budget for Australia was originally \$7 million. However, the total cash raised (excluding in-kind support) was \$1.7 million, of which \$1.396 million came direct from the Australian Government and the remainder from the founder partners, Sidney Myer Fund and the Copyright Agency Cultural Fund.

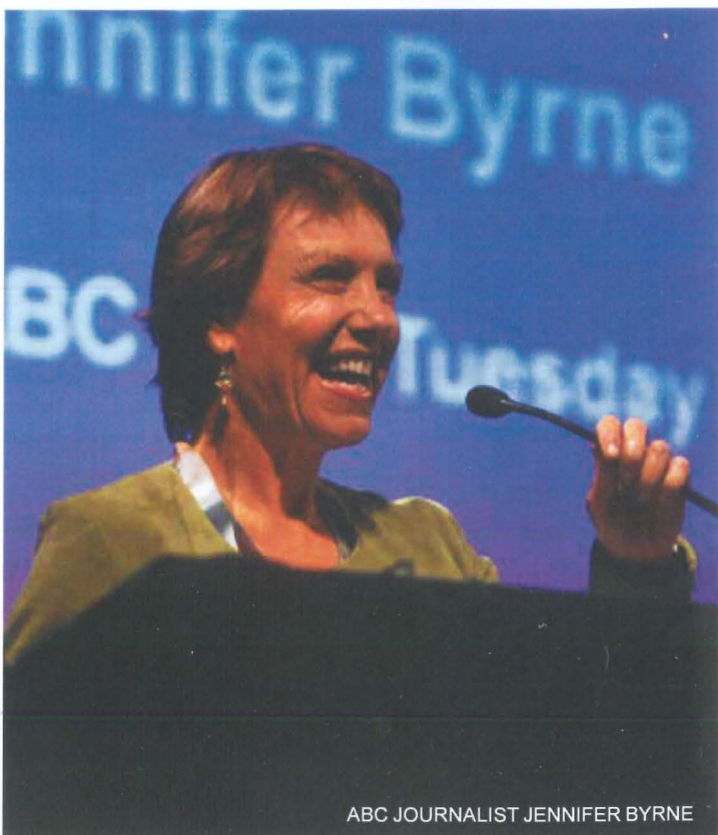
The rationale for the National Year of Reading was based on concern about the levels of literacy across Australia. Organisers cited the findings from several industry surveys and reports, which highlight workers' low levels of literacy and numeracy and how this negatively impacts business productivity and workplace safety. The *Adult Literacy and Lifeskills Survey* (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2006), conducted in 2006, showed that 46% of working age Australians had difficulty with everyday tasks such as reading newspapers, making sense of timetables, and filling in Occupational Health and Safety forms. The *National Workforce Literacy Project: Report on employers views of workplace literacy and numeracy skills* (Australian Industry Group, 2010) found that more than 75% of employers reported that their businesses were affected by low levels of literacy and numeracy. In addition, the *No More Excuses* report published by Industry Skills Councils & AgriFood Skills Australia in 2011 echo these findings, stating that millions of Australians have insufficient language, literacy and numeracy skills to benefit fully from training and to participate effectively at work; what is more worrying is that the situation appears to be worsening.

Research also shows that families are particularly important contexts for learning literacy and various studies have shown the positive stimulating effects of parental involvement in family literacy programs (van Steensel, McElvany, Kurvers & Herppich, 2010). Parents have the capacity to act as role models and supporters for their children's literacy development through reading. This is significant given the concern about literacy levels in the early years demonstrated by national literacy assessments. Although assessment data must be treated with caution, some general trends are evident. For example, the Australian Early Development Index (Centre for Community Child Health & Telethon Institute for Child Health Research, 2009), suggested that almost 23% of five year old children are developmentally vulnerable or at risk in their (school based) language and cognitive skills and the NAPLAN data showed that achievement gaps between the most advantaged and disadvantaged students remain (ACARA, 2012). Clearly, the aims of the National Year of Reading encompass the development of literacy from birth across a range of diverse communities and supporting families and adults has the potential to influence early literacy learning.'





PRIME MINISTER JULIA GILLARD OFFICIALLY  
LAUNCHES THE NATIONAL YEAR OF READING



ABC JOURNALIST JENNIFER BYRNE

Consequently, the National Year of Reading aimed to create a national campaign to raise awareness of the importance of reading and to highlight the capacity of libraries to play a positive role in developing the levels of literacy in Australia and in fostering a culture of family reading in Australian homes. A further objective was for the National Year of Reading to bring together, showcase, and build on the literacy and reading events that were already happening across Australia. The aims of the National Year of Reading were:

1. For all Australians to understand the benefits of reading as a life skill and a catalyst for wellbeing
2. To promote a reading culture in every home
3. To establish the aspirational goal for parents and caregivers to share books with their children every day.

The National Year of Reading was launched at the National Library of Australia on 14 February 2012, by Prime Minister Julia Gillard. The National Year of Reading was built on the following three principles:

#### 1. Partnerships

A network of support was established across Australia that included 15 founder partners and a substantial group of ambassadors and friends of the National Year of Reading. These partnerships were formed to create a three-tiered approach to implementing the National Year of Reading. National initiatives would be delivered across Australia through libraries, which would develop additional programs and events at the state/territory level. These would foster local initiatives, thereby encouraging local autonomy and ownership of programs and events.

William McInnes was the Patron of the National Year of Reading, supported by 111 high profile ambassadors and over 70 friends, including writers, musicians, artists, sportswomen/men, radio and television personalities, professionals from medical and education and politicians. Several sporting teams also gave their support to the National Year of Reading. Ambassadors and friends promoted the National Year of Reading through their work and each week during 2012 an ambassador was profiled on the Love2Read website; friends were also profiled, describing their involvement in the National Year of Reading and in promoting events.

National partners also included publishers (Scholastic), a multinational mass media corporation (the Walt Disney Company), and the ABC national television/radio (Jennifer Byrne) and ABC local radio. In various parts of the country, links were made between the National Year of Reading and school systems. The presence of National Year of Reading partners helped to raise awareness of the campaign, make links with organisations, promote programs and events and sustain its key aims. The creation of a network of partners and communication channels increased the opportunities to reach families and individuals across the nation.





## 2. Strong identity

The Love2Read logo was developed to ensure that the National Year of Reading was easily identifiable and highly visible. The Love2Read logo and banner appeared on books, posters, advertisements, partner websites and other marketing products. A Love2Read magazine was also developed, and made available for free, from the National Year of Reading Love2Read website. The logo was specifically designed to be used beyond 2012 and was available for all partners and individuals to use in the promotion of programs and events. The website was developed to create a virtual community, mirroring the partnerships, connecting and updating participants across Australia. It provided a central source of information and resources and a platform for discussion and comment. It also linked to partner websites and advertised ongoing events across Australia.



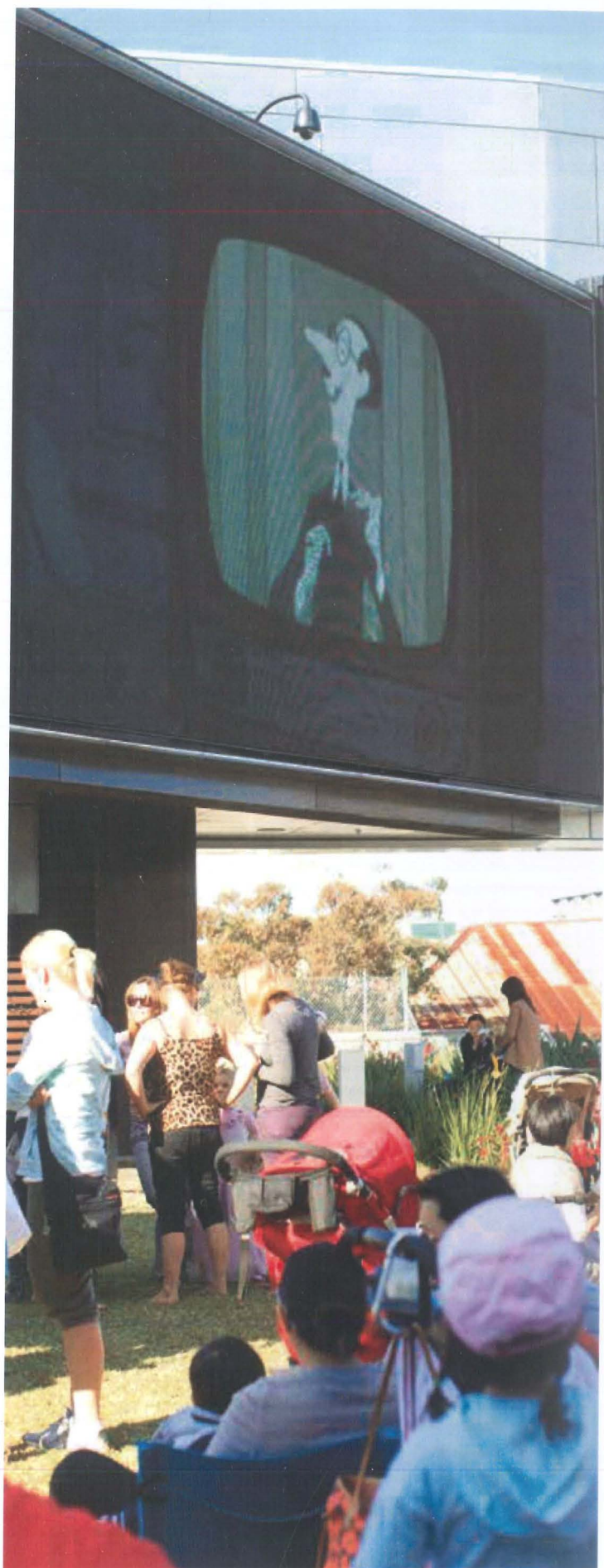
## National Year of Reading 2012

### 3. Different levels of implementation

The structure of the National Year of Reading was designed to ensure that programs and events were developed and delivered at national, state/territory and local levels. This three-tiered approach was designed to create a shared focus within a flexible framework, giving states/territories and local communities autonomy to develop programs and events that reflected the literacy needs of their target audiences. Four national campaigns were created to reach different target audiences (see details of national campaigns in chapter three). Each national program was designed to be implemented in a different way:

- *Are We There Yet?* (a component of the campaign *One country Reading*) was designed to travel around Australia;
- The *Reading Hour* was designed to be held simultaneously across the country on a particular day or week;
- The *Library Membership* campaign was designed to run for 12 weeks;
- The *National Year of Reading in the Workplace* campaign was held at different times during the year in workplaces in each state and territory.

It was intended that each state/territory library would develop initiatives linked to the national campaigns and these would stimulate local partners to create events in their communities. In addition to the momentum created by the national campaigns, the structure of the National Year of Reading was designed to support the creation programs and events that reflected the literacy and reading needs and goals of local communities.







## Chapter 2: Research method

As stated previously, the Centre for Early Childhood Research at Edith Cowan University was commissioned by the Library Agency to undertake the evaluation of the National Year of Reading. The primary aim of this study was to provide a descriptive account of the National Year of Reading in three states/territories across Australia. Since the National Year of Reading was iterative in nature, we did not intend to capture the campaign in its entirety; rather our research represents a snapshot in time of the National Year of Reading partnerships, programs and events. Data collection took place between May 2012 and October 2012.

At the commencement of the evaluation, we worked with the Library Agency to determine the terms of reference, evaluation model and research questions. After extensive negotiation, it was agreed that the aim of the research was to document the way in which the National Year of Reading was implemented at national, state/territory and local levels. We undertook four case studies conducted in WA, the ACT and QLD and at a national level. Thus the participants in the study were all involved in the promotion and delivery of the National Year of Reading through various roles. Although our research was essentially qualitative, we were able to draw on the statistical data collected by the Library Agency. In essence we aimed to document the perspectives of the of the National Year of Reading partners in order to explore the following questions:

1. What is the nature and outcomes of the National Year of Reading partnerships at state, program and event level in relation to the promotion of reading as a life skill, a reading culture in the home, and the sharing of books with children from birth?
2. How has involvement in the National Year of Reading added value to the outcomes normally achieved within and between participating organisations?
3. How will the National Year of Reading partnerships and programs be sustained beyond 2012?

Using the results of our extensive case studies we were then able to suggest how the National Year of Reading had made a difference to the reading culture of Australia. In order to construct an understanding of 'what happened' in the National Year of Reading across Australia, we undertook a qualitative case study approach, using interviews and surveys to explore the nature, impact and sustainability of the program at national, state and local levels. The interviews were designed to explore participants' experiences and provide insights into their perspectives, practices and outcomes. To gain further insight into programs and events, we undertook a desk based review of artefacts and illustrations of practice. The documentation of social networking sites and photographs enabled us to capture rich, contextualized data, which illustrated both processes and practices in the development of National Year of Reading partnerships.





An Advisory Group was convened from universities across Australia, whose members would give advice about the methods, analysis and interpretation of data. The following eight academics were invited to join the Advisory Group:

- Associate Professor Helen Nixon, Queensland University of Technology;
- Associate Professor Kaye Lowe, University of Canberra;
- Associate Professor Valerie Faulkner, University of Western Australia;
- Associate Professor Susan Hill, University of South Australia;
- Dr Louise Paatsch, Deakin University;
- Ms Deborah Prescott, Charles Darwin University;
- Adjunct Professor Len Unsworth, University of New England;
- Associate Professor Mary Mackin-Horarik, University of New England.

The academics listed above accepted our invitation to join the Advisory Group, with the exception of Adjunct Professor Len Unsworth and Associate Professor Mary Mackin-Horarik who were unable to participate. Two teleconferences were conducted with the group to discuss the pre-evaluation and post-evaluation phases of the project.

At the initial teleconference held in March 2012, the research team sought feedback from the group on the intended methods and analysis. Generally, members of the group expressed the view that the methodology was appropriate and addressed the research questions. They made the following suggestions about the data gathering and timeline for the project:

1. The research team should help participants to prepare for the interview by forwarding the interview questions ahead of time and by providing examples of possible indicators of 'value addedness'.
2. The research team should ask the participants how to best describe the work they had done in the National Year of Reading.
3. The research team should try to interview participants before and after they had delivered targeted programs and events.

We were able to implement recommendation one and two, but the third recommendation proved to be more difficult due to time constraints and availability of participants. However, participants were asked to review and provide feedback on each case study as it was completed. Following the main data gathering phase of the project, a second teleconference with the group was conducted in October 2012 to discuss the analysis of data. Members commented on the wealth of data at national, state and local level and endorsed our method of analysis.

## Data collection

Altogether 53 participants agreed to take part in the research. These participants were a representative sample of the National Year of Reading at national, state/territory and local level. A table of the interviews, document collection and surveys is provided in Appendix 1. Surveys were based on interview questions when participants were unavailable for a one-to-one interview.

## National level interviews and surveys

At the national level, interviews and/or surveys were conducted with the following stakeholders:

- The Library Agency's project management team

This comprised the National Year of Reading Project Director and project managers responsible for ambassador and partner liaison as well as social media and data collation. We asked them about the nature of their roles and responsibilities, the logistics of the National Year of Reading, and issues they faced in promoting and implementing the project across Australia. In addition, we also asked about the outcomes of the National Year of Reading to date and how other national literacy campaigns informed the National Year of Reading.

- Representatives of Australia-wide partners

These included partners associated with the delivery of national campaigns, such as: Good Reading Magazine, Madman Entertainment and the State Library Victoria; the Walt Disney Company, Disney Junior, Dymocks Bookstores, Scholastic, the Indigenous Literacy Foundation and the Institute for Aboriginal Development Press. Interviews were conducted to explore the development of partnerships, and how the National Year of Reading had helped to achieve their aims and created new opportunities to further their mission. Participants were also asked about the added value of the campaign in relation to the development of new initiatives and partners, audience development and funding, and increased book sales. Strategies and structures to support sustainability and extension of partnerships were also explored.

- Founder partners

Altogether there were 15 founder partners. The Chair of the founder partner group was interviewed, and the remaining 12 members were surveyed. We asked about their role in overseeing and directing the National Year of Reading and what they hoped to achieve and contribute. We also asked about partnerships and/or networks they had formed through the National Year of Reading and the outcomes of these liaisons. We asked in what way the National Year of Reading had influenced their organisations and if they saw a future beyond 2012 for the National Year of Reading.

- Ambassadors and author ambassadors

There were over a 100 National Year of Reading ambassadors. We sent surveys to the author ambassadors nominated by the Library Agency and invited three of them to be interviewed. We asked about their involvement in the National Year of Reading, partnerships they had formed, and what they hoped their commitment to the National Year of Reading would achieve. We also asked if the National Year of Reading had added to their profile, and if they intended to sustain and/or extend partnerships formed during 2012.

## State/territory-level interviews

Where possible, interviews were conducted with the following participants for each state/territory:

- The chief executive officer or director of the state/territory library;
- The National Year of Reading state/territory steering group coordinator;





- A National Year of Reading state/territory steering group member;
- Three key partners nominated by the National Year of Reading steering group coordinator;
- Three program coordinators;
- A representative from the state/territory's public library association or lead body.

Each nominated person was interviewed individually, having received the questions prior to the interview. As with the national partners, they were asked: about their involvement in the National Year of Reading, what they had achieved, and if they were intending to sustain or extend the partnerships they had created within their state, organisation and/or community.

In particular, the state/territory steering group coordinators were asked how the National Year of Reading had helped them to reach their target audiences, how they were monitoring and evaluating programs, and whether the National Year of Reading had added to their profile locally and nationally. Where appropriate, library staff were also asked about the four national campaigns (*One Country Reading*, *The Reading Hour*, *Library Membership*, and *The National Year of Reading in the Workplace*) and how the campaigns were implemented at the state/territory level. We asked if they felt the national campaigns had benefitted their state/territory and what structures had been developed to support the sustainability and extension of partnerships.

#### Desk-based research

A desk-based review of National Year of Reading documentation was undertaken to gain insight into the implementation and outcomes of the National Year of Reading. The use of social media sites were also documented as a means of identifying the role of information technology in linking organisations and communities and promoting the National Year of Reading. Photographs of artefacts and resources were taken to support documentation.

## Analysis

In the first phase of analysis, documented in chapter three, we coded the data from each case study under each research question and created a profile of the range and nature of programs, events and partnerships at a local, state/territory and national level. From this we identified findings in relation to each individual case study. Written responses to questions were clarified by email or a phone call. The process of creating resources was documented and photographs of resources were used to illustrate and substantiate claims. Documentation was analysed to illustrate the processes and practices that contributed to the effective implementation and outcomes. Quotes from the participants were categorised and used to exemplify findings.

In the second phase of analysis, discussed in chapter four, we categorised the data generated across the four case studies under each research question, grouped in relation to the role of each set of participants, at a national, state/territory and local level. We then identified the strong and enduring themes that emerged across each case and set of participants. These themes were interrogated to elicit key overall findings in relation to each research question.

We then used the findings from the second phase of the analysis to inform the final chapter, chapter five, which identifies what difference the National Year of Reading has made in terms of creating a nation of readers, what legacy endures from the campaign, and what overall conclusions and recommendations can be drawn from the evidence of the evaluation.

## Limitations of the study

We acknowledge that many partnerships continued to grow and new partnerships and programs and events emerged after the completion of the data collection. We also acknowledge that it was impossible to gain access and information to all the initiatives and partnerships that grew out of the National Year of Reading in WA, the ACT and QLD. However, by gathering data from national, state/territory and local participants we endeavoured to capture a broad perspective of the National Year of Reading.

It is important to re-iterate that this study was not about the outcomes of the National Year of Reading in relation to the families and individuals who took part in programs and events. This was undertaken to some extent by the program and event coordinators and the Library Agency.

*Participant/s* is used through-out this report to refer to the people who were involved in the promotion and delivery of the National Year of Reading.

*Program/s* and *event/s* are used through-out this report to refer to the programs, events and activities that were implemented during the National Year of Reading.







## Chapter 3: Profiles of the National Year of Reading



Chapter three presents the data as a series of case studies that profile the partnerships, programs and events that were implemented during the National Year of Reading at the national level and for the ACT, WA and QLD. In general, each profile provides information about: the context; the organisational structures put in place to support the implementation of the National Year of Reading; the partnerships that were developed; the programs and activities that were implemented; the methods used to reach target audiences; the methods used to monitor and evaluate programs and activities; the state/territory library membership drive; and the legacy that has resulted from the National Year of Reading. In addition, each state/territory library nominated several partners to participate in the evaluation and these same aspects are reported on for each partner program.

### Profile One: National Year of Reading at a national level

For the national profile, information about the context and background to the National Year of Reading as well as the funding and organisational structures put in place to support its implementation have already been discussed in chapter one. Consequently, in this section information is given about the national level partnerships and programs and how they were implemented and monitored during the National Year of Reading, how target audiences were reached, and the resultant legacy.

### National partnerships and programs

As stated previously, the National Year of Reading was adopted at the Australian Library and Information Association (ALIA) Public Libraries Summit in 2009 and the founder partners group along with the Library Agency were charged with managing and implementing the National Year of Reading campaign. While a significant level (\$1.396 million) of federal government funding was accessed for the National Year of Reading this was not enough to run a fully funded national campaign that would reach communities at a local level. Consequently, a 'grassroots' approach was taken and the National Year of Reading was set up to function in a flexible, organic way so that it grew from people's networking efforts and their shared ideas. Consequently, National Year of Reading organisers focused on creating and making available the resources that organisations and participants in the National Year of Reading would need to run their own local programs and events. The Library Agency team considered that utilising a 'grassroots' approach allowed the National Year of Reading to achieve \$7 million-worth of value on a budget of \$1.7 million.

With such an approach, it was imperative that the Library Agency generate a large network of partners with whom to collaborate on National Year of Reading projects and activities as well as to help to spread the key messages of the National Year of Reading. Initially, many of the partners were formed from the network of connections that the founder partners and the Library Agency team brought with them to




the project and subsequently this evolved as new partners recommended other partners and the National Year of Reading initiative became better known.

Linking with the National Year of Reading was seen as a way to enrich what potential partners were already doing and different levels of partnership were created to suit the capacity of organisations and individuals who wished to become involved. Commercial, not-for-profit, government, and private sector organisations were categorised as partner organisations and individuals were categorised as friends of the National Year of Reading. There were no costs associated with partnering with the National Year of Reading, however, there was an expectation that partners would actively endorse key messages about the pleasure of reading and the need to improve literacy levels in Australia.

For organisations and individuals, the main advantages of partnering with the National Year of Reading centred on increasing their profile by: linking their name with a major national event; taking advantage of media interest throughout 2012; using the opportunity to connect with new audiences; making a positive impression with the Australian reading public; creating a competitive advantage; increasing their reach and profile in government and funding circles; helping to make a positive difference; and bolstering the Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) credentials of commercial organisations. In addition, partners were able to: access National Year of Reading design materials; publicise their activities via National Year of Reading media (website, Facebook, wiki, e-newsletter, Twitter) and wider media releases; and make connections with other National Year of Reading partners and potential funders.

Potential partners were also able to select the level of commitment that they could give to the National Year of Reading. At the simplest level this called for a public endorsement of the National Year of Reading in the form of a letter, a quote, a logo or a link that could be placed on the Love2Read website. Partner organisations could also become more active by: promoting the National Year of Reading via their 'owned media' (websites, newsletters and other forms of communication) and using National Year of Reading branding on their own programs and activities; participating in national programs and in events implemented at a state/territory and local level; or creating, funding and delivering their own National Year of Reading programs. Friends of the National Year of Reading were encouraged to: download and use the National Year of Reading email signature; use the National Year of Reading button to make a link to the Love2Read website (<http://www.love2read.org.au>) from their website, Facebook page, or blog; volunteer

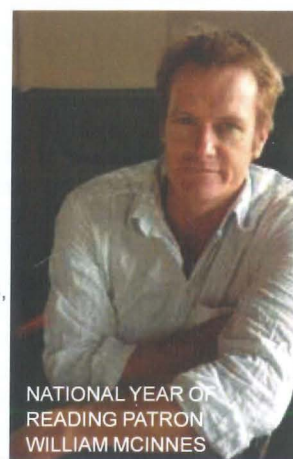


*In some ways it's not the National Year of Reading that's important; it's actually raising the profile of our partners. So for instance, when we designed our website, the web designers wanted everybody to come to our website, and then stay within our website, which is the traditional business model. We said we're not a traditional business. What we want is for people to come to our website because they've heard of the National Year of Reading, but then be directed off to one of our partners, because actually they're the people who are doing the work and they're the people who will be around after 2012".*

Library Agency team member

at National Year of Reading activities; and help spread the word about the National Year of Reading through their book groups, clubs, social networks, colleagues, family and friends. By November 2012, 231 partner organisations and 79 friends had added their logo to the National Year of Reading website as well as a link to their own webpage.


In addition to the partner organisations and friends of the National Year of Reading, a number of ambassadors were also invited to help promote key messages. High profile members of the public such as politicians, business people, journalists, authors, illustrators, educators, musicians, philanthropists, poets, photographers, chefs, sports men and women, and sports teams were invited to become national or state/territory ambassadors to the National Year of Reading. William McInnes, celebrated actor and writer, agreed to become the patron for the National Year of Reading. Ultimately, 111 ambassadors (51 national and 60 state/territory ambassadors) gave their support to the National Year of Reading (see Appendix 2).



NATIONAL YEAR OF  
READING PATRON  
WILLIAM MCINNES

*Being asked to be Patron of the Year of Reading is as great a pleasure as it is an honour. It's easy to be blasé about reading and books – easy to take them for granted. Yet when I think about it, reading to me is the key to so much. The key to a wider reach of information, a path to learning, the joy of entertainment and the exciting of the imagination. It's just so much fun. Helping to encourage people to remember that and maybe to discover that, is something I look forward to very much.*

William McInnes, National Year of Reading patron







AUTHOR AMBASSADORS TANIA MCCARTNEY,  
HAZEL EDWARDS AND DR ANITA HEISS

Ambassadors supported the National Year of Reading by making personal appearances or by lending their profile and image to marketing collateral such as video clips, posters and media releases. For example, as patron of the National Year of Reading, William McInnes made a video to endorse the key messages (see <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4s7CLYRS04s&NR=1&feature=endscreen>). A good example of the willingness of ambassadors to support the National Year of Reading is also evident in the way Alison Lester, children's author and illustrator, gave permission in July 2010 for her book *Are We There Yet?* to be used to as a major theme for the National Year of Reading.

Many of the ambassadors to the National Year of Reading were authors and/or illustrators and were referred to as author ambassadors. With their obvious enthusiasm and a wealth of experience in the field of reading and literature, they were a natural fit for the role of ambassador to the National Year of Reading. The author ambassadors considered that promoting reading to the community and sharing the process of writing and illustrating texts was a core part of their business. In addition, most author ambassadors publicised their activities and those of the National Year of Reading via their own networks and webpages and this, in conjunction with traditional media coverage, served to increase the reach of the National Year of Reading.

Over the course of the year, the author ambassadors gave much of their time to local and national activities. Typically they visited schools, libraries, universities and festivals in metropolitan, rural and remote communities where they talked about and delivered workshops about reading, writing and illustrating and involved themselves with associated events such as readers' and writers' festivals and fundraisers to promote the National Year of Reading.

*As an author I had been looking forward to this year since hearing about it last year. It seemed such an exciting dedication, a whole year devoted to promoting reading. I looked forward to doing what I do every year, getting kids excited about books, and seeing it expand into the wider community. I spend at least half of my professional time in schools, at festivals and conferences talking to kids and adults about writing, books and why getting kids to read is so important. The National Year of Reading added much more of a focus to what I do and made lots more people stand up and take notice of what I think is fundamentally important to a child's life and success.*

Deborah Abela, NSW National Year of Reading ambassador

*It has helped Kids Book Review, of which I am founder. I have dedicated three years to building this site which specialises in children's literature, reviews, interviews, resources for parents and teachers. It has also helped me as an author to connect with more children and show them how fabulous it is to write and read and hone these skills.*

Tania McCartney, ACT National Year of Reading ambassador





When considering what the role had added to what they normally do, the author ambassadors reported that it had given a title to a role that they had already assumed and that it had increased the number of activities that they had been involved with throughout the year. They also articulated how the role of author ambassador had helped to spotlight their own enterprises and to raise their profiles as authors with a larger audience. Most author ambassadors reported that they had made many more valuable connections with individuals and organisations who shared their interest. They also reported increased partnerships with libraries, schools and universities and that these partners had expressed an interest in further collaboration. However, feedback from one author suggests that the lack of promotion on the part of some libraries meant that their author events were not well attended and that ultimately they had to work with their publisher to ensure subsequent events were successfully promoted. Ultimately, the author ambassadors felt that the National Year of Reading had lent a greater focus to the work they did in the community and that the initiative had been a very successful one.

### Finding 3.1.1

A 'grassroots' approach allowed the National Year of Reading to achieve \$7 million-worth of value on a budget of \$1.7 million.

The campaign was designed to function in a flexible, organic way so that it grew from people's networking efforts and their shared ideas. Resources that organisations and participants in the National Year of Reading would need to run their own local programs and events were created and made freely available.

The success of the 'grassroots' approach was dependent on the development of a large network of partners collaborating on National Year of Reading projects and activities as well as helping to spread the key messages of the campaign.

Partnerships were created on several levels, including partner organisations, friends and ambassadors. The author ambassador role was one that most authors assume is part of their core business. They felt the National Year of Reading was successful and that their involvement had promoted their own enterprises, raised their profile as an author, and increased their partnerships and opportunities for future collaboration. Author feedback also highlighted unevenness in the promotion of national National Year of Reading events.

## Reaching the target audience

A wide range of tools were used to reach quite different audiences. The main aim of the National Year of Reading campaign was to reach the general public so as to elevate the importance of a reading culture in every home. However, given the levels of available funding, it was also necessary to reach an audience of reading professionals to help deliver the key messages of the National Year of Reading to the general

public. The Library Agency used slightly different tools to promote the National Year of Reading to these different audiences.

The National Year of Reading website, Love2Read, was set up in 2011 as the public face of the National Year of Reading and was the key tool for attracting the attention of, and communicating with, the general public. Love2Read was a comprehensive website that also served as a central resource for the various stakeholders involved in the campaign. It housed documents, guides, and suggestions about how to become involved in the National Year of Reading and provided points of contact for the public to obtain further support. In addition to accessing the Love2Read website, the general public could also subscribe to a monthly e-newsletter which provided information about current and upcoming National Year of Reading events. While it was difficult to quantify the impact of social media, the Library Agency team considered it a very important element of a media strategy because of its currency and potential to 'go viral'. Consequently, Facebook and Twitter were also used throughout the National Year of Reading campaign as a way to reach those members of the public who preferred to communicate via that medium.

To reach the target audience of reading professionals, the Library Agency set up a wiki space (<http://love2read2012.wikispaces.com/>) that allowed users to access a complete range of resources to assist their promotion of the National Year of Reading. This included essential support documents that provided: background documentation to do with the National Year of Reading; relevant research and fact sheets; the key messages about the National Year of Reading; an overall guide to the National Year of Reading; an overview of the national programs; guides for setting up National Year of Reading steering groups and accessing supporters and ambassadors; ideas for events; media templates; and downloadable resources including logos, banners, animated gifs, advertisements, collateral (posters, flyers, bookmarks, stickers), presentations, a template funding application, and merchandise. The Library Agency also communicated regular updates to reading professionals via email, which provided professionals with 'behind the scenes information' about program launches, and the resources or tools that they needed to make the most of the National Year of Reading.

### Finding 3.1.2

In terms of communication, it was important to recognise the difference between participants who would help deliver the National Year of Reading campaign events and activities and the general public.

The Love2Read website provided a one-way information conduit for the public, while the Love2Read wiki provided a communication channel that could be used to share information and resources among stakeholders.

The use of online media and distribution methods kept costs down while expanding the reach of the campaign.





## National campaigns implemented during the National Year of Reading

Four national campaigns were implemented during the National Year of Reading were: *One Country Reading*, *The Reading Hour*, the *Public Library Membership Drive*, and the *National Year of Reading in the Workplace*.

### Campaign 1: *One Country Reading*

The *One Country Reading* campaign aimed to engage current readers and to help them to re-discover the joy of reading. It comprised three different programs, *Our Story* for adults, *Read This!* for teenagers, and *Are We There Yet?*, for children.

#### *Our Story*

The *Our Story* program was aimed at an adult audience and it set out to identify a set of eight books representing the remote, regional, suburban and metropolitan aspects of Australia, which could be collated as the National Year of Reading 2012 collection.

This collection of books, if read together, would articulate the Australian experience. The aim was to use this collection to encourage keen readers to try something different, to expand their reading choices, and to connect readers all around Australia who would share the stories – a kind of giant book group.

The shortlists for each state and territory were promoted with posters and flyers in public libraries, online through [thereadingroom.com](http://thereadingroom.com), via local media (*The Age* ran excerpts from all the books on the Victorian shortlist), and by Jennifer Byrne and the *First Tuesday Book Club* team, on ABC2.

A panel from each state and territory selected eight books that were either written by local authors or were set in the local area. A shortlist of titles for each state/territory was then promoted to the reading public in each state who were asked to vote for the book that they thought best represented their state/territory. The public were able to vote in person at public libraries or online via the ABC Arts Gateway and more than 16,200 votes were ultimately received. The eight winning titles announced at the launch of the National Year of Reading in February 2012 were: *The idea of Home*, John Hughes, NSW; *Jasper Jones*, Craig Silvey, WA; *Listening to Country*, Ros Moriarty, NT; *Smoke and Mirrors*, Kel Robertson, ACT; *Time's Long Ruin*, Stephen Orr, SA; *Wanting*, Richard Flannagan, TAS; *Well Done, Those Men*, Barry Heard, VIC; *The White Earth*, Andrew McGahan, QLD.

Subsequently, the *Our Story* collection was displayed in bookshops and libraries and following the announcement of the winners, the National Year of Reading also funded author tours and ambassador visits to libraries and community



OUR STORY ACT WINNER KEL ROBERTSON  
WITH PRIME MINISTER JULIA GILARD

centres in metropolitan, regional and remote parts of the country. Touring authors included John Hughes, Barry Heard and Stephen Orr. In addition, the public were encouraged to read the *Our Story* collection and to participate in a national book group by joining a book club or taking part in the online discussion about the collection that was hosted by The Reading Room, a website dedicated to reading and disseminating information about books.

Data concerning the number of votes cast and the value of the media coverage achieved by the *Our Story* program will be carried out in conjunction with the overall National Year of Reading report at the end of 2012. The Library Agency team reflected that since the campaign was always intended to be a National Year of Reading, not a National Year of Literacy, it was important to engage with keen readers as well as with those who struggled with the written word. They state that *Our Story* brought in viewers of the *First Tuesday Book Club* and users of the ABC Arts Gateway and, from September 2011, it established the campaign as a serious contender for the attention of book lovers across Australia.

### Finding 3.1.3

*Our Story*, part of the *One Country Reading* campaign, successfully targeted adult book lovers across Australia. This initiative also helped profile established and emerging authors and contributed to the discussion about the excellence of Australian writing.





## Read This!

The national *Read This!* competition invited 12-18 year-olds to nominate a book they thought their peers should read during the National Year of Reading and then to present a convincing argument for their choice which was also a creative response to the story. The *Read This!* project was based on the Creative Reading Prize, part of the annual Inky Awards for youth literature run by the Centre for Youth Literature (CYL), an arm of the State Library of Victoria (SLV). The Creative Reading Prize was introduced as an idea by Paula Kelly, reader development manager at SLV, who advised the Library Agency on the *One Country Reading* program in 2010. It was a useful strategy for engaging a teen audience in the promotion of reading, and by building on this approach the *Read This!* project team had access to a

*The whole idea is that peer to peer promotion is the best way of getting teenagers to read books... We knew we had a community of users there, we thought, okay, we know how to make that work in an online environment, we know that kids are excited about providing creative response to reading, we know that it engages them in a conversation about recommending those books to one another.*

State Library of Victoria staff

readymade platform for working in the online environment, for engaging with a youth target audience and with an existing community of users.

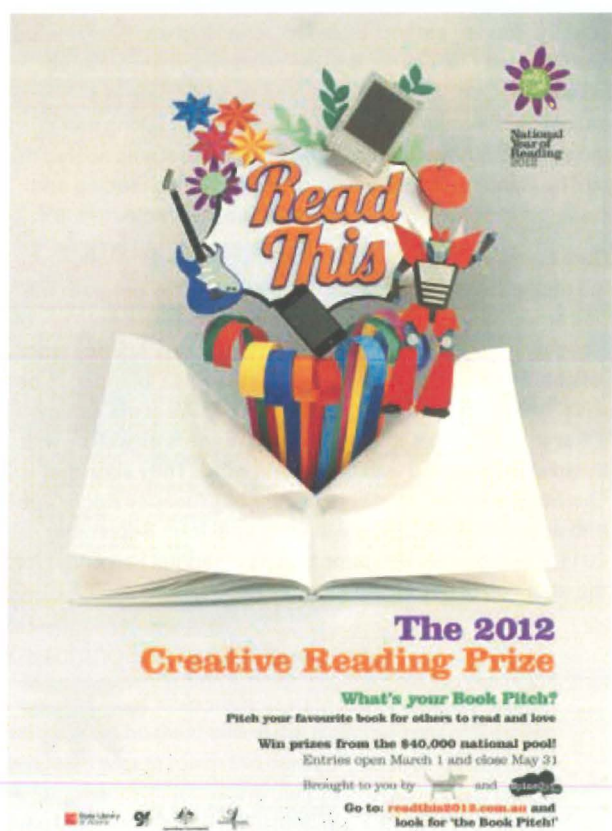
The *Read This!* project was coordinated and led by the CYL in collaboration with the Library Agency, Good Reading Magazine and Madman Entertainment. The project was also supported by state/territory libraries in terms of identifying and selecting a panel to judge shortlisted entries from their state or territory. The CYL played a lead role in the development, planning and implementation of the project, overseeing the logistics of the competition and providing overall guidance of the day to day project management. Good Reading Magazine provided promotional support through spineout.com.au, its online youth literature site, and the hosting and technical advice for the *Read This!* 2012 project website (<http://readthis2012.com/>). Madman Entertainment provided the creative design elements including the branding and posters, and highly desirable writer-artist signed manga titles accessed from its Japanese publisher partners as prizes.

Project organisers mostly used technology and online spaces to engage young people in the competition. A dedicated *Read This!* project website was developed and branded especially for the competition and was used to promote the project, collect and display submissions and announce the winners. The SLV's insideadog website was used to post a series of blogs to highlight impressive entries and provide links back to the *Read This!* website. The insideadog website Facebook and Twitter accounts were also used to promote the competition. By utilising the insideadog website and social media accounts in this way, the CYL was able to reach its existing online audience as well as youth literature professionals such as teachers, librarians and publishers who could help engage the target audience. Additionally, Madman Entertainment promoted the *Read This!* project through its retail and trade partners, public pop culture events, newsletter, website and social media.

The *Read This!* competition ran from March to May 2012 and young people submitted their entries online. A panel of judges from each state/territory library reviewed the entries to the competition to determine which was the most creative and persuasive in advocating for the entrant's chosen book.

Ultimately, more than 320 online entries to the *Read This!* competition were received from around Australia. This showed that significantly more young people had engaged with the *Read This!* competition compared with the Victorian based *Creative Reading* competition which had generally attracted 30-40 entries a year. The SLV staff believes that, while only a small number of teens respond to the *Creative Reading* competition each year, the many thousands of young people who engage with insideadog are influenced by the recommendations made by their peers.

The entries to the competition took the form of poems, crossword puzzles, videos, book reports, newspaper articles, artworks and board games. A significant number of these were of the manga and anime genre and Madman staff deduced from this that a pre-existing segment of Madman's target audience was active in the competition. In addition, it was evident that a number of schools had participated in the competition, submitting whole-class entries.



READ THIS COMPETITION POSTER



SLV staff reflected that their participation in the *Read This!* project had enabled them to develop and strengthen relationships with their project partners. More specifically, the project provided them with the opportunity to build networks with local operational staff in the respective state and territory libraries, a partnership that previously had only been developed at a management level. Most of the feedback that the SLV staff had received about the project from their state/territory library counterparts was positive and indicated that they had enjoyed the opportunity to link with the young people, schools and public libraries in their state. However, it was also evident from the data gathered for this study that while state/territory libraries were happy to support the project and to assist with the judging, some staff were surprised that they were asked to be involved in national activities and programs without receiving any additional resourcing.

Madman staff saw the *Read This!* competition as an opportunity to raise awareness of the manga and graphic

novel genre and they stated that they would like to continue the partnership with CYL beyond the National Year of Reading as a way to continue to build awareness of the genre. The partnership between Madman Entertainment and the CYL has also resulted in one of the Madman authors being engaged as an official blogger on the insideadog website whilst also having one of their books nominated for an Inky Award.

While the SLV staff have yet to review the *Read This!* project, they feel confident that they will seek further opportunities to develop their partnership with Good Reading Magazine and Madman Entertainment given the obvious success of the project. The SLV staff feels that this project has added to their national leadership role in engaging young people and supporting youth literature. They would like to use this role to continue implementing a national *Creative Reading Prize* beyond the National Year of Reading and will seek further partnerships and resourcing in order to continue that work.

#### Finding 3.1.4



While direct participation in the *Read This!* competition came from 320 young people, this represented only a small percentage of the young people who actually accessed the website and book promotions and who would have been aware of the initiative.

Partner organisations involved in *Read This!* described the project as providing the opportunity to strengthen their relationships with other partners. State library staff working at the operational level found it especially useful to work collaboratively with their peers in other states and territories.

The expansion of the competition in 2012 provides the opportunity for the CYL to build on the national profile of the activity.







ARE WE THERE YET AUTHOR AND NATIONAL YEAR OF READING AMBASSADOR ALISON LESTER



ARE WE THERE YET EXHIBITION

### *Are We There Yet?*

Alison Lester is a National Year of Reading ambassador and an Australian author/illustrator who has published over 25 children's picture books and two young adult novels. She visits remote Australian communities each year and uses her books to encourage children and adults to write and draw about their lives. The National Year of Reading program, *Are We There Yet?*, was based on her book of the same name which centres on a road trip that Alison and her family made in a camper van around Australia.

The *Are We There Yet?* program comprised a national travelling exhibition, posters and display materials for public and school libraries, as well as a competition for the under 12 age group. The touring exhibition displayed Alison's original artwork and documented the developmental stages of the book via the family's photographs and travel diaries, the first illustrations, the text and design drafts, and the finished work itself. A variety of age-appropriate education resources were provided for children to complete at the exhibition and National Year of Reading partner, Vision Australia, prepared accessible versions in DAISY text and Braille that were included in the exhibition.

An *Are We There Yet?* online competition was held for children from two to 12 years of age who were invited to describe their home or a favourite place they had visited in Australia in a short story, letter or original artwork. The competition was set up in four categories – pre-school, prep and year 1, years 2 and 3, and years 4, 5 and 6. The *Are We There Yet?* competition moved around the country with the exhibition and a separate competition was held for each state. Entries to the competition were judged by Alison Lester and there were school as well as individual prizes given. The school prizes included visits from other well known Australian children's authors and illustrators.








The *Are We There Yet?* exhibition toured the country over the course of the National Year of Reading, stopping at one location in each state. The exhibition opened in February at the Northern Territory Library and, subsequently, it travelled to: the Civic Library in the ACT in March; the Butter Factory in Queensland in May; the Kingston LINC in Tasmania in June; the Wattle Range Library in South Australia in July; the Newcastle Library in New South Wales in August; the Wanneroo Library in Western Australia in September; and finally the Melbourne City Library in Victoria in November.

In addition to the coverage offered by the Love2Read website, the exhibition was promoted by state/territory libraries to schools, public libraries and the general public and in some cases local bookshops also promoted the exhibition. Promotional material provided courtesy of the National Year of Reading included bookmarks, posters, activity sheets, and teacher notes, all of which supported visitors to the exhibition. Additionally, the exhibition provided teachers with an opportunity to engage with students in a number of ways, for example the development of an *Are We There Yet?* board game and an online 'Google lit trip' from the south of Australia to the Top End (school in Tasmania).

Reports written by state/territory libraries indicate that the exhibition was well attended by the general public as well as by school groups. Library staff provided talks to schools and other interested groups and Alison Lester attended some exhibitions to talk about her work and to participate

in library-based activities. Some libraries also incorporated themes and activities relating to the exhibition into their school holiday or other regular in-house programs. The libraries involved with the *Are We There Yet?* program generally reported that the exhibition was very well received and that sessions involving Alison Lester were particularly popular. Visitor feedback articulated a great appreciation for the quality of the artwork and for the opportunity to see how the book was created. The exhibition also inspired people to create their own pictures and to keep travel diaries of their own adventures. The Library Agency staff considered that at another level, *Are We There Yet?* also provided a question for stakeholders – are we there yet as a reading nation? They report that this theme was explored in a number of debates and discussions throughout the year.



*A fabulous opportunity to see how a book evolved.*

Visitor, AWTY exhibition, Libraries ACT

*I want to write a book now about my upcoming trip to Fiji!*

Visitor, AWTY exhibition, Libraries ACT

### Finding 3.1.5

By profiling the stages in the development of one leading Australian children's picture book, from concept and initial drawings through to the final publication, the touring exhibition exposed thousands of children and families to the creative process. It inspired some visitors to create their own pictures and travel diaries, and it provided teachers with an opportunity to engage with students in a number of ways.

This initiative not only profiled Alison Lester's work, it also drew attention to the work of many writers for children and young people. In addition, it prompted stakeholders to consider the question – '*Are We There Yet?*' as a reading nation?